

off even the semblance of legality in the measures of his government: he assumed arbitrary power, under the impression that the critical circumstances in which he was placed would excuse everything. But, however inexplicable were the means to which the Emperor resorted to procure resource's, it is but just to acknowledge that they were the consequence of his system of government, and that he evinced inconceivable activity in repairing his losses so as to place himself in a situation to resist his enemies, and restore the triumph of the French standard.

But in spite of all Napoleon's endeavors the disasters of the campaign of Russia were daily more and more sensibly felt. The King of Prussia had played a part which was an acknowledgment of his weakness in joining France, instead of openly declaring himself for the cause of Russia, which was also his. Then took place the defection of General York, who commanded the Prussian contingent to Napoleon's army. The King of Prussia, though no doubt secretly satisfied with the conduct of General York, had him tried and condemned; but shortly after that sovereign commanded in person the troops which had turned against ours. The defection of the Prussians produced a very ill effect, and it was easy to perceive that other defections would follow, Napoleon, foreseeing the fatal chances which this event was likely to draw upon him, assembled a privy council, composed of the Ministers and some of the great officers of his household. MM. de Talleyrand and Cambaceres and the President of the Senate were present. Napoleon asked whether, in the complicated difficulties of our situation, it would be more advisable 'to negotiate for peace or to prepare for a new war, Cambaceres¹ and Talleyrand gave their opinion in favor of peace, which, however, Napoleon would not hear of after a defeat; but the Due de Feltre,¹ knowing how to touch the mischievous chord in the mind of Bonaparte, said that he would consider the Emperor dishonored if he consented to the abandonment of the smallest village which had been united to the Empire

i The Minister for the War 'Department, **Clarke**.